

REMARKS

Claims 1-22 remain pending in the present application. Claims 1, 2, 7, 12, 13 and 18 have been amended. Basis for the amendments can be found throughout the specification, claims and drawings as originally filed.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-4, 6-8, 10, 12-15, 17-19 and 21-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Grundei, Yamaoka or Yamaoka, et al. Claims 1 and 12 have each been amended to define the third supporting member as being annular and that the third annular supporting member defines an annular support surface. A clearance is defined between the valve disc and the entire annular support surface of the third annular supporting member.

Grundei discloses support surfaces 27 which are annular and which contact valve disc 15. An advance opening 31 allows fluid flow. Thus, Grundei does not disclose an annular support surface where a clearance between the valve disc and the entire annular support surface is defined.

Yamaoka discloses a middle land between annular grooves 14a and 14b where the two grooves are in communication with each other through one or more radial orifices extending through the middle land. Thus, Yamaoka does not disclose an annular support surface where a clearance between the valve disc and the entire annular support surface is defined.

Yamaoka, et al. discloses an annular contact surface 208 which is located between grooves 206 and 207. A constant orifice 210 radially extends through the land

defining contact surface 208. Thus, Yamaoka, et al. does not disclose an annular support surface where a clearance between the valve disc and the entire annular support surface is defined.

Thus, Applicant believes Claims 1 and 12, as amended, patentably distinguish over the art of record. Likewise, Claims 2-4, 6-8, 10, 13-15, 17-19, and 21-22 which ultimately depend from Claims 1 and 12 are also believed to patentably distinguish over the art of record. Reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 5, 9, 11, 16 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Grundei, Yamaoka or Yamaoka, et al. Claims 5, 9, 11, 16 and 20 each ultimately depend from Claims 1 and 12. As stated above, Claims 1 and 12 have been amended and are now believed to patentably distinguish over the art of record. Thus, Claims 5, 9, 11, 16 and 20 are also believed to patentably distinguish over the art of record. Reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested.

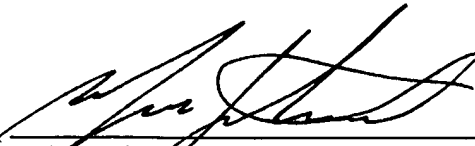
CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the

Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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